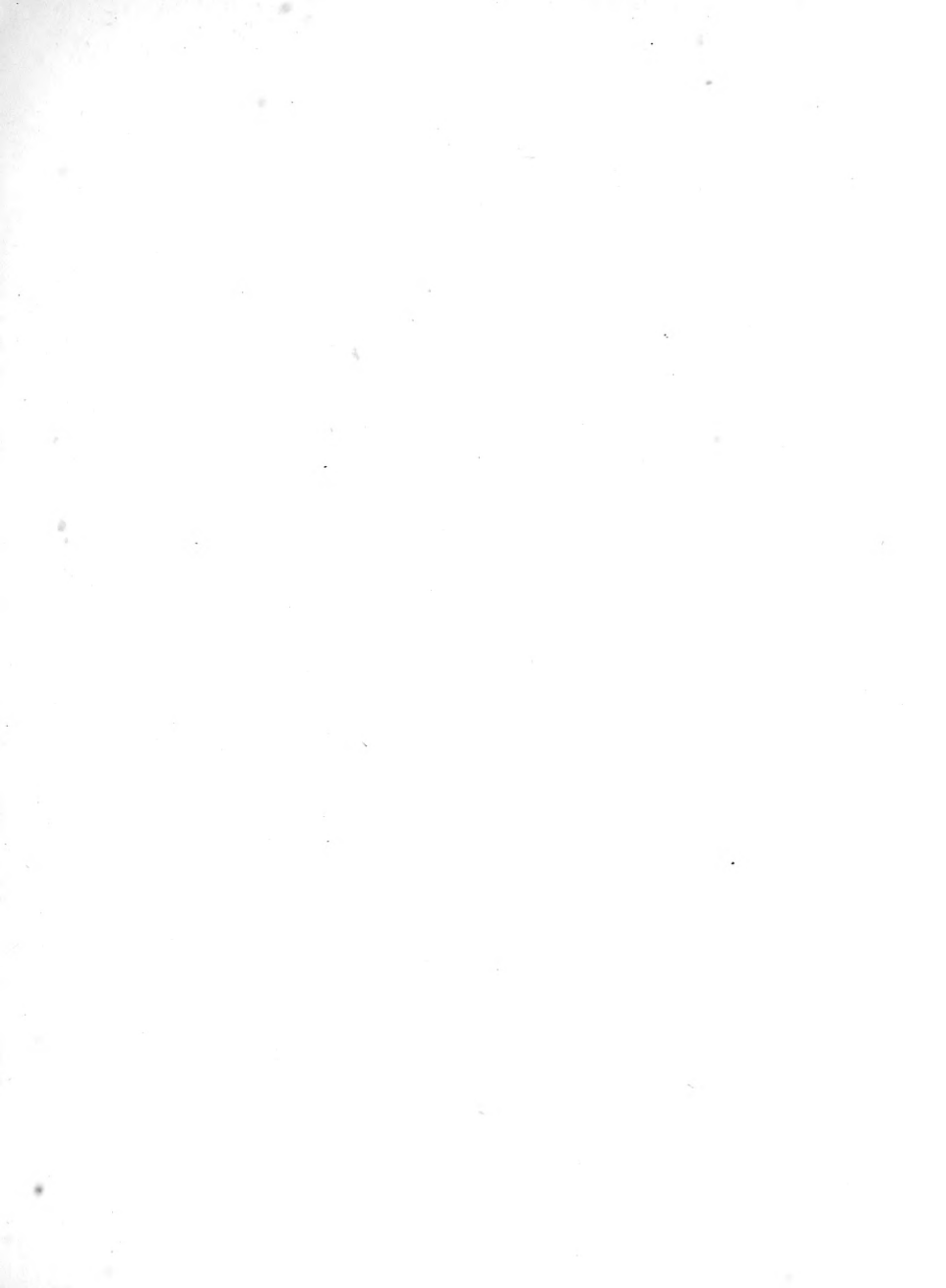




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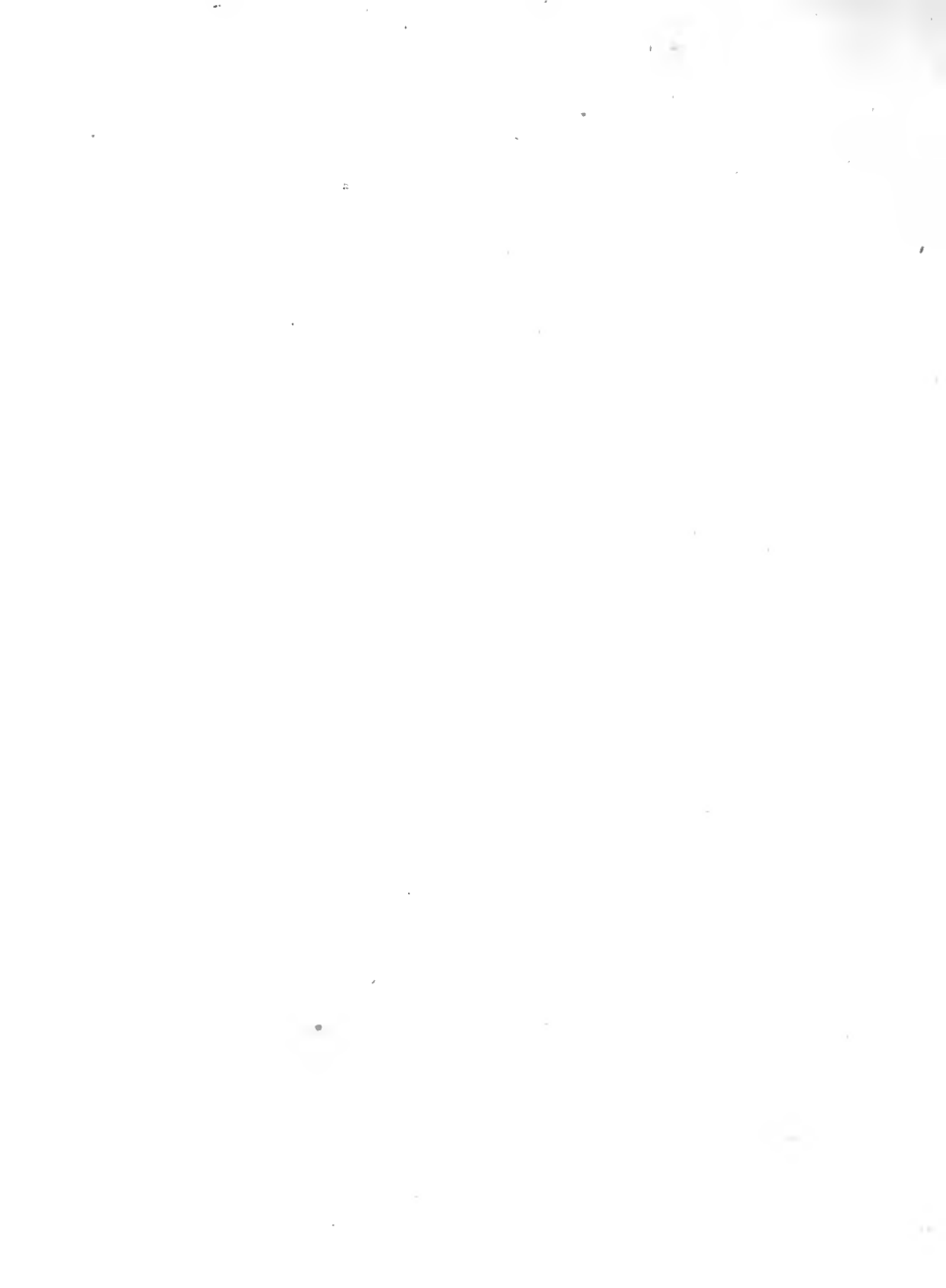










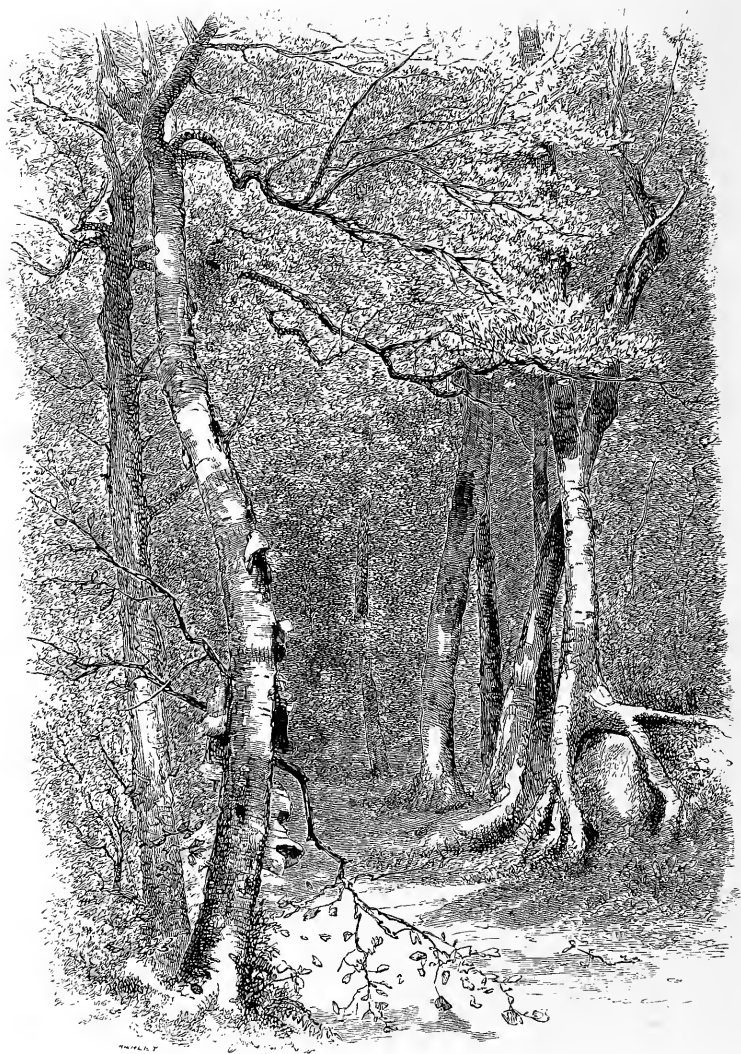


*AMONG THE TREES*

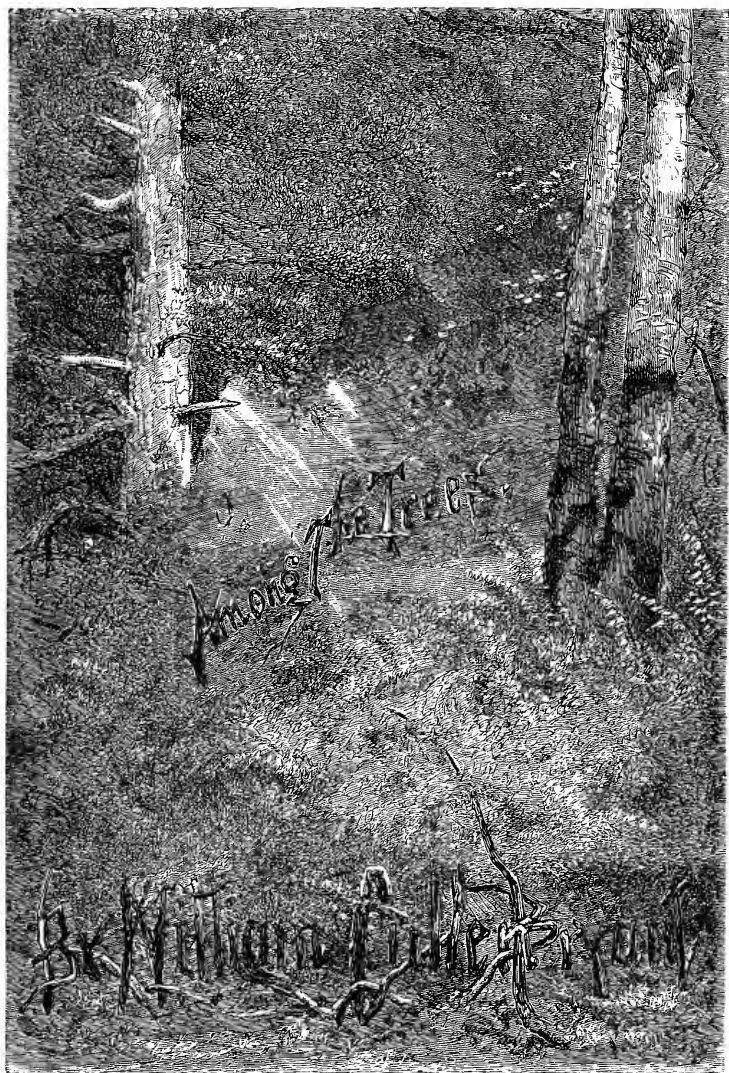
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# AMONG THE TREES

BY

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

**Illustrated**

*FROM DESIGNS BY JERVIS McENTEE, ENGRAVED BY HARLEY*

13841

NEW YORK

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

FOURTH AVENUE AND TWENTY-THIRD STREET

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OH ye who love to overhang the springs,  
And stand by running waters, ye whose boughs  
Make beautiful the rocks o'er which they play,  
Who pile with foliage the great hills, and rear  
A paradise upon the lonely plain,  
Trees of the forest and the open field !  
Have ye no sense of being ?



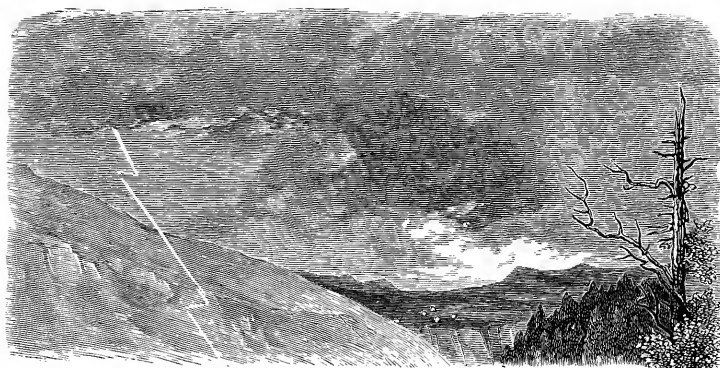


Does the air,  
The pure air, which I breathe with gladness, pass  
In gushes o'er your delicate lungs, your leaves,  
All unenjoyed? When on your Winter-sleep  
The sun shines warm, have ye no dreams of Spring?  
And, when the glorious Spring-time comes at last,  
Have ye no joy of all your bursting buds,  
And fragrant blooms, and melody of birds  
To which your young leaves shiver?









Do ye strive  
And wrestle with the wind, yet know it not ?  
Feel ye no glory in your strength when he,  
The exhausted Blusterer, flies beyond the hills,  
And leaves you stronger yet ? Or have ye not  
A sense of loss when he has stripped your leaves,  
Yet tender, and has splintered your fair boughs ?  
Does the loud bolt that smites you from the cloud  
And rends you, fall unfelt ?





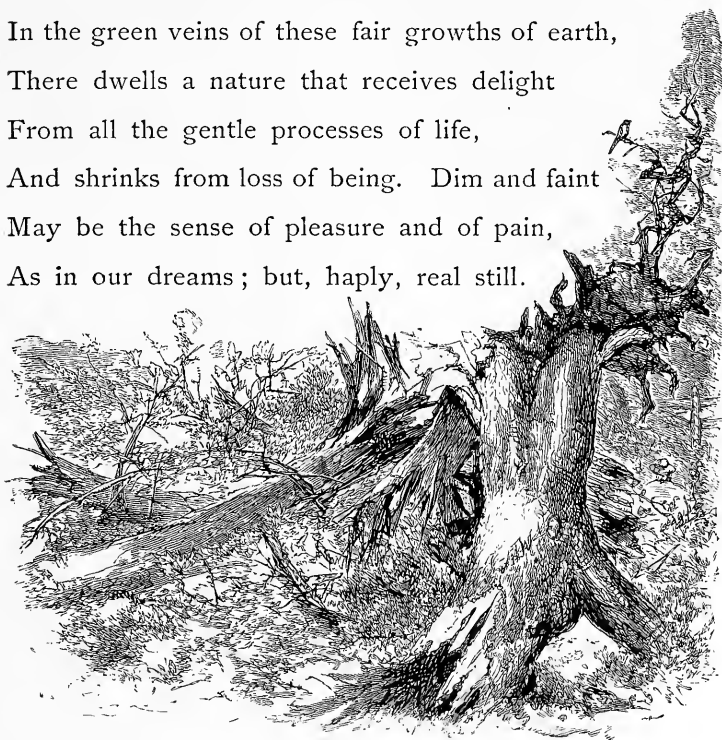


Do there not run  
Strange shudderings through your fibers when  
the axe  
Is raised against you, and the shining blade  
Deals blow on blow, until, with all their boughs,  
Your summits waver and ye fall to earth?



Know ye no sadness when the hurricane  
Has swept the wood and snapped its sturdy stems  
Asunder, or has wrenched, from out the soil,  
The mightiest with their circles of strong roots,  
And piled the ruin all along his path?

Nay, doubt we not that under the rough rind,  
In the green veins of these fair growths of earth,  
There dwells a nature that receives delight  
From all the gentle processes of life,  
And shrinks from loss of being. Dim and faint  
May be the sense of pleasure and of pain,  
As in our dreams; but, haply, real still.







Our sorrows touch you not. We watch beside  
The beds of those who languish or who die,  
And minister in sadness, while our hearts  
Offer perpetual prayer for life and ease  
And health to the belovèd sufferers.  
But ye, while anxious fear and fainting hope  
Are in our chambers, ye rejoice without.  
The funeral goes forth ; a silent train  
Moves slowly from the desolate home ; our hearts  
Are breaking as we lay away the loved,  
Whom we shall see no more, in their last rest,  
Their little cells within the burial-place.

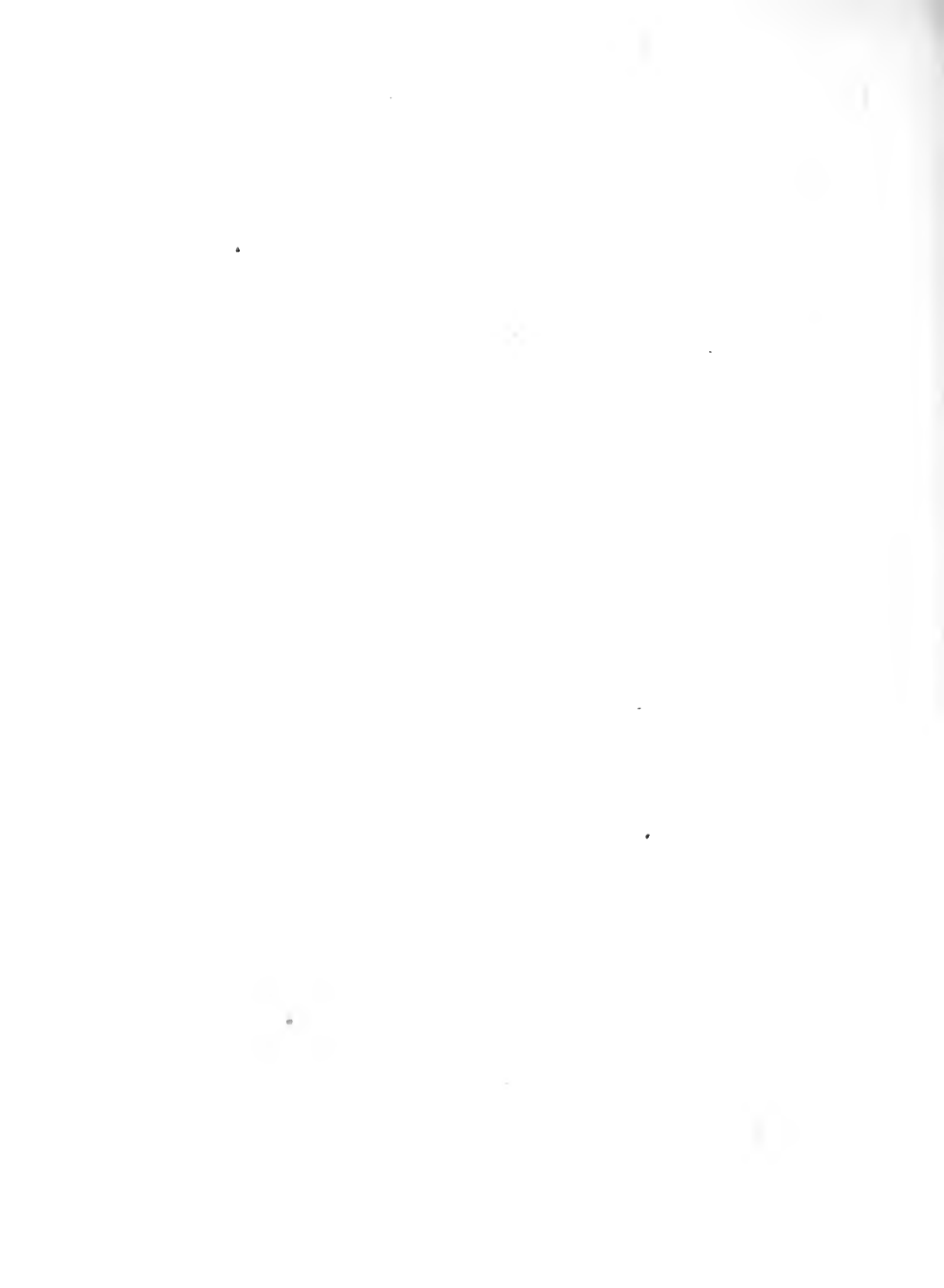






Ye have no part in this distress ; for still  
The February sunshine steeps your boughs  
And tints the buds and swells the leaves within ;  
While the song-sparrow, warbling from her perch,  
Tells you that Spring is near.







### The wind of May

Is sweet with breath of orchards, in whose boughs  
The bees and every insect of the air  
Make a perpetual murmur of delight,  
And by whose flowers the humming-bird hangs poised  
In air, and draws their sweets and darts away.  
The linden, in the fervors of July,  
Hums with a louder concert. When the wind  
Sweeps the broad forest in its summer prime,  
As when some master-hand exulting sweeps  
The keys of some great organ, ye give forth  
The music of the woodland depths, a hymn  
Of gladness and of thanks.





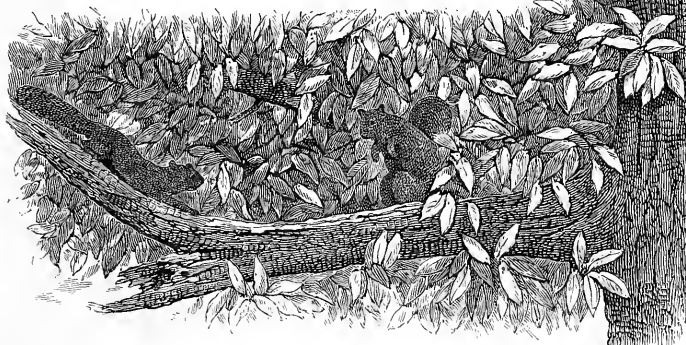


The hermit-thrush

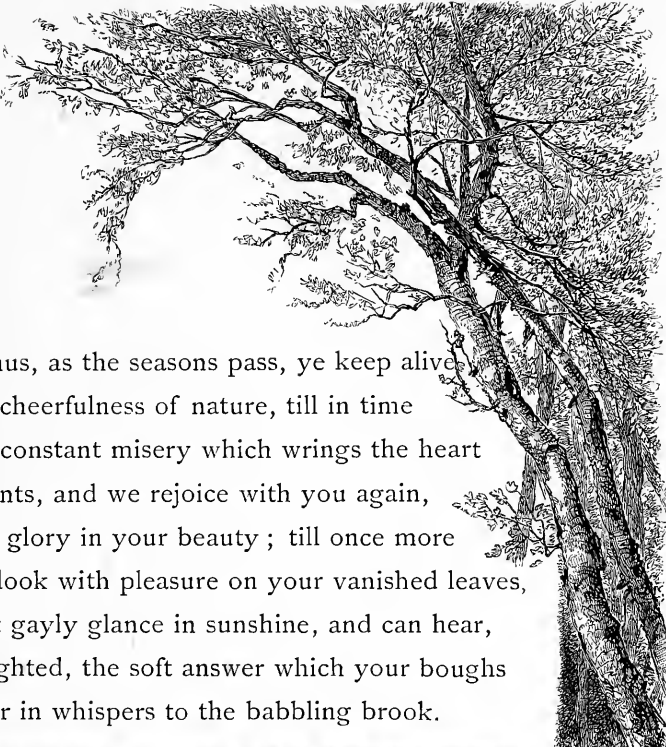
Pipes his sweet note to make your arches ring.  
The faithful robin, from the wayside elm,  
Carols all day to cheer his sitting mate.  
And when the Autumn comes, the kings of earth,  
In all their majesty, are not arrayed  
As ye are, clothing the broad mountain-side,  
And spotting the smooth vales with red and  
gold.

While, swaying to the sudden breeze, ye fling  
Your nuts to earth, and the brisk squirrel  
comes

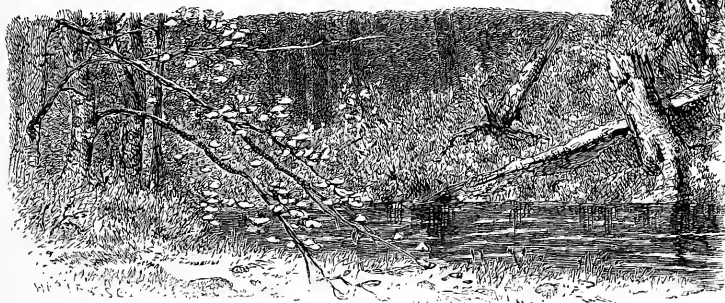
To gather them, and barks with childish glee,  
And scampers with them to his hollow oak.





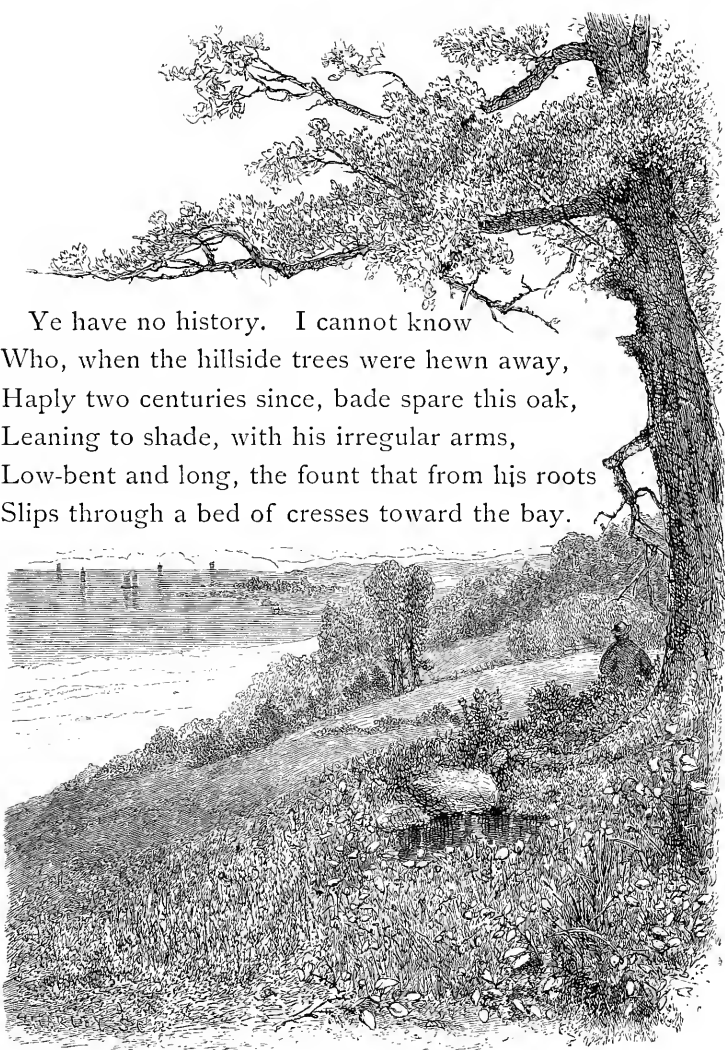


Thus, as the seasons pass, ye keep alive,  
The cheerfulness of nature, till in time  
The constant misery which wrings the heart  
Relents, and we rejoice with you again,  
And glory in your beauty ; till once more  
We look with pleasure on your vanished leaves,  
That gayly glance in sunshine, and can hear,  
Delighted, the soft answer which your boughs  
Utter in whispers to the babbling brook.

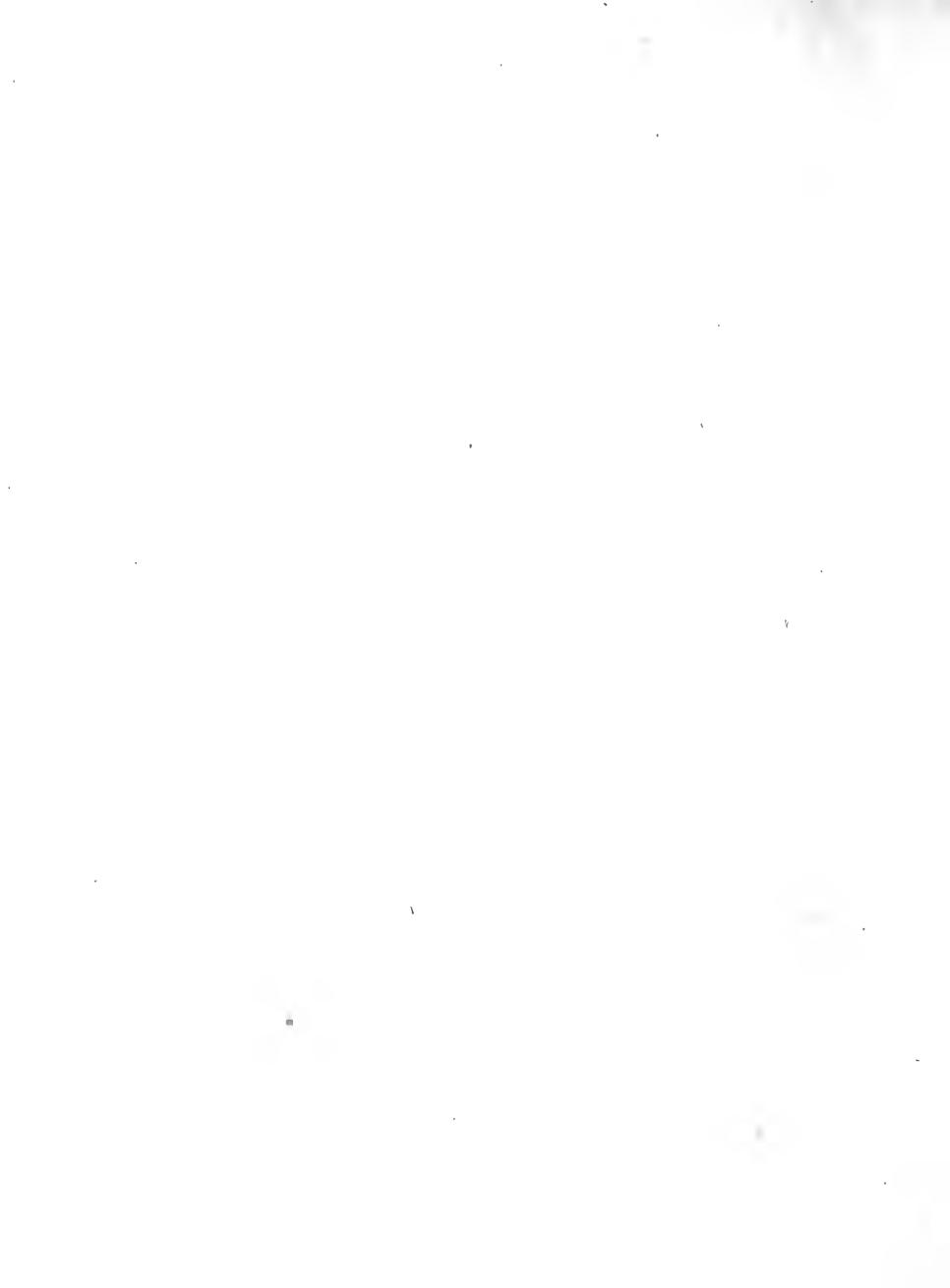








Ye have no history. I cannot know  
Who, when the hillside trees were hewn away,  
Haply two centuries since, bade spare this oak,  
Leaning to shade, with his irregular arms,  
Low-bent and long, the fount that from his roots  
Slips through a bed of cresses toward the bay.





I know not who, but thank him that he  
left

The tree to flourish where the acorn fell,  
And join these later days to that far time  
While yet the Indian hunter drew the bow  
In the dim woods, and the white woodman first  
Opened these fields to sunshine, turned the soil  
And strewed the wheat. An unremembered

Past

Broods, like a presence, 'mid the long gray  
boughs

Of this old tree, which has outlived so long  
The fitting generations of mankind.



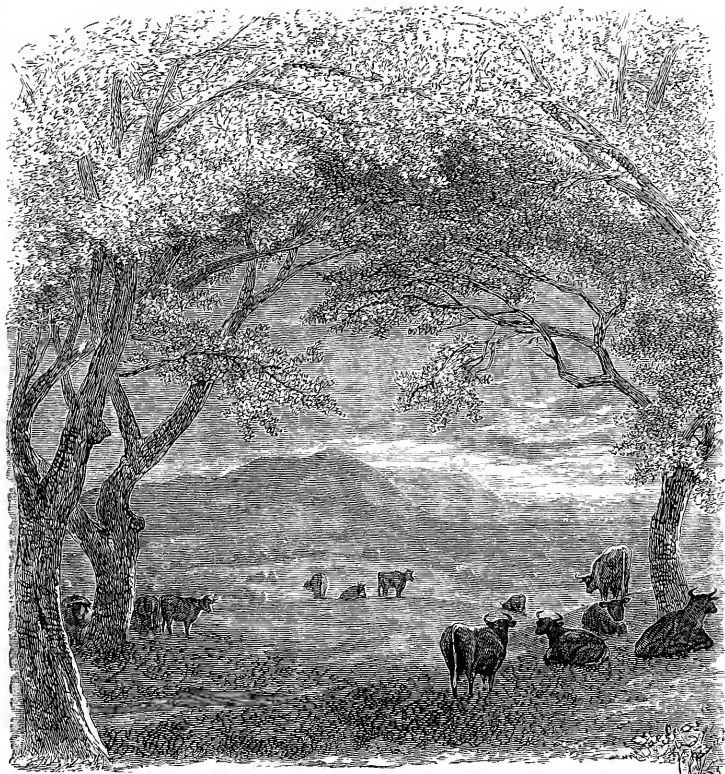


Ye have no history. I ask in vain  
Who planted on the slope this lofty group  
Of ancient pear-trees that with spring-time burst  
Into such breadth of bloom. One bears a scar  
Where the quick lightning scored its trunk, yet  
still

It feels the breath of Spring, and every May  
Is white with blossoms. Who it was that laid  
Their infant roots in earth, and tenderly  
Cherished the delicate sprays, I ask in vain,  
Yet bless the unknown hand to which I owe  
This annual festival of bees, these songs  
Of birds within their leafy screen, these shouts  
Of joy from children gathering up the fruit  
Shaken in August from the willing boughs.







Ye that my hands have planted, or have spared,  
Beside the way, or in the orchard-ground,  
Or in the open meadow, ye whose boughs  
With every summer spread a wider shade,  
Whose herd in coming years shall lie at rest  
Beneath your noontide shelter?

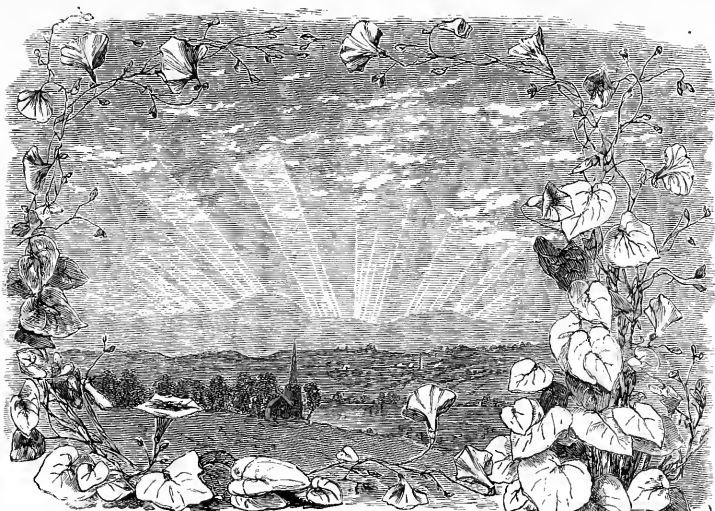






Who shall pluck  
Your ripened fruit ? who grave, as was the wont  
Of simple pastoral ages, on the rind  
Of my smooth beeches some belovèd name ?  
Idly I ask ; yet may the eyes that look  
Upon you, in your later, nobler growth,  
Look also on a nobler age than ours ;



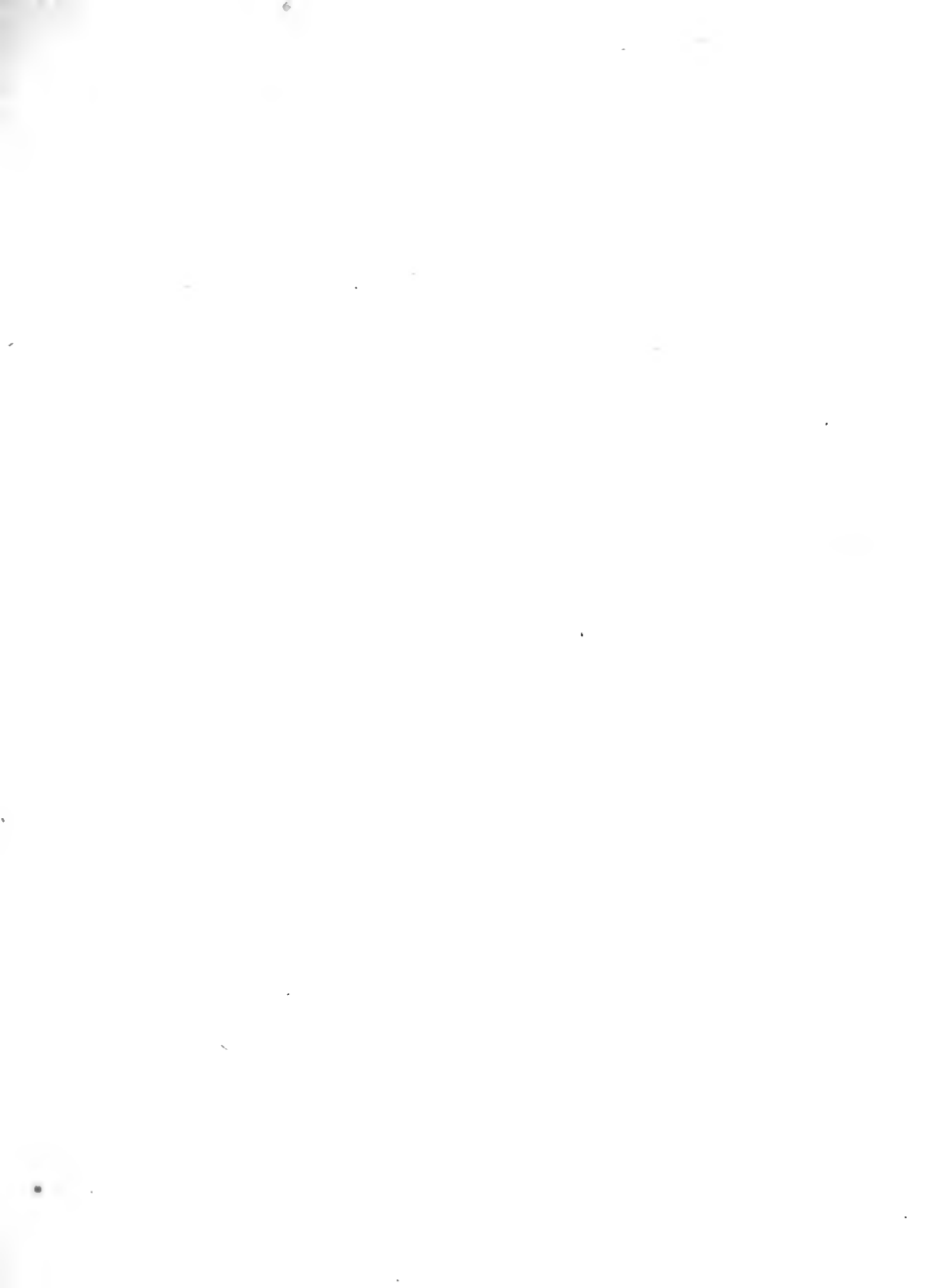


An age when, in the eternal strife between  
Evil and Good, the Power of Good shall win  
A grander mastery ; when kings no more  
Shall summon millions from the plough to learn  
The trade of slaughter, and of populous realms  
Make camps of war ; when in our younger land  
The hand of ruffian Violence, that now  
Is insolently raised to smite, shall fall  
Unnerved before the calm rebuke of law,  
And Fraud, his sly confederate shrink, in shame,  
Back to his covert, and forego his prey.



























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